





S P E E C H

UPON

THE FOREIGN SLAVE TRADE,

BEFORE THE

LEGISLATURE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

BY

L. W. SPRATT, Esq., OF CHARLESTON.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, December 14, 1853.

MR. L. W. SPRATT—

DEAR SIR: The undersigned, in behalf of many members of the General Assembly would request that you will favor them and the public with your close, full and philosophical argument delivered before the House last night, upon the rights of the States in, and the restrictive measures of the General Government upon domestic slavery, and the propriety and policy of action by the Legislature in relation thereto.

We are convinced that the argument will do much good in awakening the people of the State to the just conception of their rights and the dangers which threaten the great institution of the South.

We therefore request that you will furnish us a copy for publication.

Very truly yours, etc.,

J. D. BLANDING,  
J. K. FURMAN,  
GEORGE P. ELLIOTT,  
CHARLES ALSTON, JR.,  
ALLEN J. GREEN,

E. B. BRYAN,  
J. C. MCKEWN,  
JOHN G. PRESSLEY,  
J. H. BROOKS.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, S. C., December 15, 1853.

GENTLEMEN: I am much obliged by the complimentary manner in which you have been pleased to notice my remarks before the House upon the subject of the foreign slave trade. I fear when they are in print, they will not come up to the impression you seem to have taken of them, but such as they are, they will be at your service as soon as I can complete a copy.

With great Respect,

I am Your Obedient Servant,

L. W. SPRATT.

TO MESSRS. J. D. BLANDING, J. K. FURMAN, GEORGE P. ELLIOTT, CHARLES ALSTON, ALLEN J. GREEN, E. B. BRYAN, J. C. MCKEWN, JOHN G. PRESSLEY, J. H. BROOKS.

## RESOLUTIONS ON THE SLAVE TRADE.

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The following resolutions were offered in the House of Representatives, and were made the special order for Monday evening, the 4th December, 1858.

Whereas, there have come to be two sections in this Union, distinct in social constitution, and in objects and motives of legislation; and whereas, of these the Northern section has come to be the stronger, and has moved the Government to consider and disturb the social institutions of the South; and whereas, the Southern section, affected by the institution of domestic slavery, is therein charged with a most momentous trust, to the proper execution of which there is a necessity for an unrestricted choice of means, and a field of unembarrassed action; be it, therefore,

*Resolved*, That the several States of the South are of right, and ought to be, in fact, supreme upon the questions which affect the fortunes of domestic slavery.

*Resolved*, That the measures of the General Government restrictive of the foreign slave trade, are in derogation of this right and ought to be repealed.

*Resolved*, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and the Representatives from this State be requested, to use all proper efforts to procure the repeal of such restrictions; and that a copy of these resolutions be forwarded to the several Southern States for their concurrence.



# S P E E C H .

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MR. SPEAKER:—In advance of discussion on the resolutions I have had the honor to present;—if they be discussed, I would ask the indulgence of the House while I state a little more at length their aim and purport.

It will be seen that they do not propose a further importation of foreign slaves. Upon the propriety of that measure there well may be a diversity of opinion, and as it is a measure which will only come in question when the States of the South shall be in a condition to act for themselves upon the subject, it is enough for the present to consider the importance of emancipating slavery from the control of Congress, while we leave that question of ulterior policy to the time when it will come in proper order for investigation.

It would be but fair to say, however, that even in reference to that ulterior policy I can have little question; and that, if restrictions by the general government should be removed, I would certainly oppose this imposition by the State. I have long been convinced that the foreign slave trade, and that alone, will solve the problem of progress of the South, and it will not be out of place, perhaps, even on the special question now before us, to briefly state the grounds of that conviction. In the first place I conceive that it is the only road to political power, and that without political power there is no security for social and political rights.

By reference to the census returns of 1808, it will be seen that the slave and hiring States were equal in number and nearly equal in population. Since that time no slaves have come to the South, but since that time five millions of foreigners have come to the North, and while therefore the South at present has but fifteen States and ten millions of people, the North has seventeen States and sixteen millions of people, and an increase of at least three hundred thousand per annum from abroad. In view of these facts it would seem certain that the South has come to be at the mercy of the North in legislation, and that these restrictions have been the causes of it.

But, as equality was lost to the South by the suppression of the slave trade, so would it seem that the slave trade would of necessity restore it. That trade re-opened, slaves would come, if not to the sea-board, at least to the western frontier, and for all who come there would be a direct increase

of representation in the national legislature.— There would also be a broader base for the ruling race to stand on. 3,500,000 slaves, support 6,000,000 masters now. Still more would give a broader basis for still more, and every slave that comes, therefore, might be said to bring his master with him, and thus to add more than twice his political value to the importance of the South.

But to political power there is a necessity for States as well as men, and slaves would quite as surely give them to us. Ten thousand masters have failed to take Kansas, but so would not have failed ten thousand slaves. Ten thousand of the rudest Africans that ever set their feet upon our shores, imported, it need be, in Boston ships and under Boston slave drivers, would have swept the free soil party from that land. There is not an abolitionist there who would not have purchased a slave at a price approaching the costs of importation, and so purchasing a slave, there is not an abolitionist there who would not have become as strong a propagandist of slavery as ever lived. As they would have taken Kansas, so if imported freely, would they take every territory offered to the west. And thus, in giving States and population to the south, it is reasonably certain that it is within the power of these rude untutored savages to decide this great political question, to restore the South to power, and, perhaps, to save this Union.

As they give a road to power for the South, so also I have thought they give the only road. To an increase of power there must be population, and of such a population as is necessary to extend the institutions of the South, there is no other source than Africa. Europeans will not come. They would come to enterprises in connection with slave labor, if these were possible, but they will not come to competition with our slaves, and while therefore they come in millions to the North, they will not come to us. But if they should, it is to be feared they would not come to strengthen us, or to extend slavery, but to exclude the slave. If slaves were abundant, there would be offices of direction to which the foreigner could come;—if they were cheap, cheap enough to be employed in competition with European operatives in the arts, there would be opportunities of enterprise to which the foreigner could come, but not so abundant, nor so cheap;

the hiring only comes to competition with them and to their exclusion, therefore, and thus it is, that from Maryland and Delaware, and from the northern counties of Virginia, and from Baltimore, Richmond, Charleston, Mobile, New Orleans and St. Louis, slaves have been driven from almost all the employments to which they were accustomed, and have been sent in thousands to the rural districts of the further South. Through such a population there is no road to power for the South. Without slaves enough for combination, they would abolitionize the States they came to strengthen, and would break the very centres of our institution. But grant the condition of abundant slaves at prices to be used in trade and we could draw an army of defenders from every State in Europe.

As the foreign slave trade would give political power to the South, so also would it give prosperity and progress. There is one thing at the South, the importance of which I think is not sufficiently estimated and this is the want of opportunity. When slaves are offered in our markets, they are competed for by planters from the South and West. To us they are worth what the lines of business open to them here, we justify; to planters from the South and West, they are worth the price that is justified by eight bales of Cotton per annum, at fifty dollars per bale. At such prices, they can hardly be employed on lighter lands in the older States; at such prices, they can never be employed by tradesmen in competition with pauper labour elsewhere. The higher prices of labour raise the price of provisions upon artisans and operatives. That still more increases the charges upon mechanical employments; there thus comes to be no margin between the costs of labour and the value of its products,—and no opportunity, therefore, in ordinary lines of business. Without such opportunity, there is no advancement in population; without advancement in population there is no profit in lines of Railroads and Steamboats; no increase in the value of lands and other permanent property, and so it is therefore, that beyond the cultivation of the soil and the sale and transportation of its products to a foreign market, it is hard to say what business there is in which enterprise and capital can be invested with the certainty of success; and while we teem with enterprise, while we pour millions into undertakings that never pay, and at the call of public spirit, are ready to pay many millions more, we do not stagnate, as is complacently asserted by holiday economists, for the reason that we have not enterprise, or fail for the reason that we are simpletons and sluggards, but we stagnate for the want of opportunity, and we fail for the reason, that we have hoped against hope, and have staked our fortunes upon the achievement of success, where success was never possible.

This state of facts would be altered by the foreign slave trade. The slaves that come, could be purchased at the costs of importation. At such prices, they could find employment on our

lighter soil; the means of living would become more abundant and more cheap; with cheap slaves and cheap subsistence, our enterprising tradesmen could compete with tradesmen in other sections of the world; instead of importing articles and implements for use, we could supply ourselves; we could turn the tide of trash back upon the older countries; a larger population would result,—a larger amount of products and fabrics would solicit transportation; hotels, railroads and steamboats would begin to pay; wealth would flow in upon us;—Importance would come to us, and instead of standing as we now stand, in provincial admiration of the Hoos and Vanderbilts of the North resplendent in the prosperity that has come upon them with 5,000,000 slavering foreigners, we ourselves could stand up still more resplendent in the prosperity to be poured upon us by the teeming thousands from the plains of Africa.

That this is not a visionary speculation, may be seen from the records of our seaboard districts. When foreign slaves were introduced, the rural parishes of Charleston district were the brightest spots in all America. Taken from the marts of Charleston to the lands adjacent, they gave to every thing they touched the spring of progress. From the labour of one year, came as many more the next. They gave drainage to the land, cultivation to the soil, and provisions in abundance to the artisans and operatives of the city. These, in turn, with labor and provisions cheap, struck boldly out upon the field of competition. Leather was tanned, cloth was manufactured, shoes, hats, clothes, and implements were made for consumption and for export. The town advanced; the country prospered; swamps were reclaimed; mansions rose; avenues were planted; pleasure grounds laid out; commerce started; ships sailed to every quarter of the world; parish churches in imposing styles of architecture were erected; and spots more progressive, and more true to the principles of religion, and more warmed by hospitality were never seen than the town and parishes of Charleston District.—But upon the suppression of that trade their splendors waned; their glories departed; progress left them for the North; cultivation ceased; the swamps returned; mansions became tenantless and roofless; values fell; lands that sold for \$50 per acre now sell for less than \$5; churches are abandoned, trade no longer prosecuted—of twenty tanyards, not one remains—of shoes, hats and implements of industry once put upon the trade of foreign towns, none now are put upon our own; and Charleston, which was once upon the road from Europe to the North, now stands aside, and while once the metropolis of America, is now the unconsidered seaport of a tributary province. Such are the effects of the foreign slave trade as exhibited in the history of Charleston District. The experience of that District, to a greater or a less extent, has been the experience of other sections of our Southern seaboard, and this would



seem to be conclusive upon the question whether that trade would once, again, give progress to the South.

So, also, is there reason to believe it would give integrity to the social constitution of the South. There are now 3,500,000 slaves to 6,000,000 masters, and thus, therefore, there are 3,000,000 masters without slaves. These, it is said, will be true to the South; and so they will be. If slavery be an evil, "the ulcer is at least their own, and they will let no others scratch it." So, also, they would not let it be abolished, for they, too, would share in the ruin of its abolition. But while there is not a white man who would not own a slave if he could—and if there were slaves at importer's prices, there is scarcely a white man who could not if he would—yet if he cannot do so, and at present prices many cannot; if forced to work in competition with the slave from the inability to get above him, there is no single white man who will not feel the instinct of repulsion—who will not use his franchise to widen his sphere—who will not elbow slaves from employments, rather than be elbowed from employments by slaves; and thus it is, that they have driven them from Northern States to the South—thus it is, that they have driven them from the larger cities of the South to the country—thus it is, that they feel themselves, and will force the Legislature to acknowledge, that there is a difference between free labor and slave labor—and thus it is, and must be, that until Etiofia be colonized, man will ever act from the centre of his own individual interest. To be clear of this, there must be no conflict of interests—no class in competition with our slaves. There would be no such class, if there were slaves, at prices low enough, for every line of business. Such as might be imported would be so cheap; and it is thus, therefore, that the foreign slave trade, to every human apprehension, would harmonize discordant interests, and restore integrity the most perfect, to the social system of the South.

In view of these considerations, then—in view of the assurance that the slave trade would restore political power to the South; that it would give progress to the South; that it would restore integrity to the social system of the South; I am free to confess that, for my own part, I would be willing, as a mere measure of policy, to reopen and legitimate, at once, the foreign slave trade.

But there is another consideration, apart from the practical operation of that measure, which, in my opinion, renders it necessary that the South shall take a decided stand upon it; And it is a consideration which, I trust, will address itself to all who feel for the honor and importance of the South, whatever may be their convictions as to those ultimate results to which I have alluded.

This Union is a democracy. Of that, I presume, there is little question. It is a democracy in name, and I suppose there are none to doubt but that it is also a democracy in nature. In fact,

the social principle that triumphed in the revolution was simply this, that "*Equality is the right of man*;" and it is very certain that this Union, as a whole, has been at little pains to disaffirm it. It entered the Constitution of our present government—it declared the law that majorities shall govern—that suffrage shall be universal—that all offices shall be elective, and that all restrictions on individual liberty shall be removed. It was at the dictate of this principle that the word slave was not admitted in the Constitution—that, in 1794, as far as we could, we prohibited the transportation of slaves from one foreign country to another—that, in 1808, we prohibited the introduction of slaves to this country—that, in 1819, we sent armed ships to cruise against the slave trade—that, in 1820, we made it piracy to engage in it—that, in 1820 also, we restricted slavery to the region south of 36.30—that, in 1842, we joined England in a maritime crusade against it, and that, in 1850, we cleansed the national capitol of the pollution of that execrable traffic. It is also under the influence of this principle that Abolition petitions have come to Congress—that we rejoice when European people cut the throats of their rulers, and that gentle-hearted dames and damsels, in shedding tears and ink upon the crimes and horrors of the age, see no single thing so deeply deplorable as the crime and horror of man's dominion over man.

But while this Union is a democracy, the South is not a democracy. It is so in its external character, and so in sentiment perhaps, for there are very many of us who yet sympathize in the feeling that *equality is the right of man*, but in its social condition the South is not a democracy. On the contrary, it is perhaps the purest form of aristocracy, the world has ever seen. Elsewhere, aristocracies have been forced and artificial, here it is natural and necessary, and the cases are as rare as comets, that individuals of the one class have passed into the other. The principle that equality is the right of man, is true to an extent, and to that extent we have adopted it. It is true that men of the same race are equal, and they are not divided, therefore, by any political distinctions. But it is not true that men of all races are equal. It is not true that the negro is the equal of the white man. He has never been able to rear a structure of civilization in his native land; he has not been able to sustain the structure prepared for him in the West Indies; he has not been able to stand up to the structure sustained over him at the North, and neither in his native land or in a foreign land, in a savage or a civilized condition, has he ever been able to illuminate one living truth with the rays of genius. Not so equal, he has not been admitted to an equality. He has not been forced to a position which nature has fitted him to claim. The South has been content to act rather on fact than theory. She has assigned him to his true condition—she has inexorably held him to it, and in doing so, she has announced in social practice,

despite the teachings of philanthropy, what I now would have her proclaim to the world, that "equality is not the right of man, but is the right of equals only."

Such being the social attitude of the South, I would ask whether we shall not affirm it and proclaim it? and whether it is not now the time, and this the occasion, upon which we should demand of the general government, the recognition of our right to be supreme upon the questions which affect it?

Shall we not affirm it? And why shall we not affirm it? Is it for the reason that democracy is right? There is one sense in which it may be right. It is right, where one section of a people is elevated above another by political distinctions, merely, that those distinctions should be done away with. It was right that the distinctions between the Plebeian and Patrician should have given way in Rome; that the vassal should have risen to the level of the lord in France, and it is right, perhaps, that the Commons should advance upon the hereditary peers of England, and tell them ever, as upon the passage of the reform bill, that they must pass their measure, or that the king should make a house of lords to pass them; and so it is right, perhaps, that peer and peasant, of the same race, and with no difference in natural ability to distinguish them, should come at length to the same horizontal plane of a democracy. It is right, at least in this, that it is natural and necessary that it should be so. But is the social condition that results from that democratic plane a thing to be commended? Let the inquirer look at the fearful vibrations from anarchy to despotism in Rome. Let him look at the rivers of blood that flowed from free and equal France along the streets of Paris. Let him look at the brigandage that rules in Mexico. Let him look at the fearful portents at the North. Let him look at the prostration of all that is elevated;—at the rise of all that is low. Let him look at the reptiles that crawl from the sinks of vice to brandish their forked tongues about the pillars of the capitol; at the bands of patriots that march the streets of New York with banners inscribed with "liberty" on one side, "we will have bread" upon the other, and then say, whether, if equality be indeed the right of man, there be not conditions in it that render it illusory, and whether inequalities of some sort,—whether distinct social orders, no matter how objectionable in theory—are not of necessity in social practice.

Is it for the reason slavery is wrong, that we are not to affirm our attitude? That the slavery of one man to another no better than himself, is wrong, may be admitted. It is a condition that can only be maintained by force, and no condition may be right when force is necessary to sustain it. But is the slavery of the negro to the white man wrong? To that as little force is necessary to hold oil and water at unequal levels. Is it of injury to the negro? I venture to affirm that no negroes that were ever born, have

been so blessed, in themselves and their posterity, as the 400,000 Africans imported to this country. Is it of injury to the white man? I venture to affirm that there are no men, at any point upon the surface of this earth, so favored in their lot, so elevated in their natures, so just to their duties, so open to the emergencies and so ready for the trials of their lives, as are the 6,000,000 masters in the Southern States. Is it of injury to society? In every state of society that is artificial—and all are artificial where classes are placed in unnatural relations to each other—there must be collisions of conflicting interests, and the throes of an irregular nature. It is so, that social revolutions have disturbed the constitution of almost every nation. It is so, that the props of social order have been stricken down in France, and it is so, that democracy advances upon the conservatism of every European Constitution. But from this source of evil the slave society is free; there can be no march of slaves upon the ranks of masters; they have no reachings to a higher sphere; there is no contest of classes for the same position; each is in its order balanced, and I have a perfect confidence that when France shall fall again into the delirium of liberty—when the peerage of England shall have yielded to the masses—when democracy at the North shall hold its carnival—when all that is pure and noble shall have been dragged down—when all that is low and vile shall have mantled to the surface—when woman shall have taken the places and habiliments of man, and man shall have taken the places and habiliments of woman—when Free Love unions and phalansteries shall pervade the land—when the sexes shall consort without the restraints of marriage, and when youths and maidens, drunk at noon-day and half-naked, shall reel about the market places, the South will stand serene and erect as she stands now,—the slave will be restrained by power, the master by the trusts of a superior position,—she will move on with a measured dignity of power and progress as conspicuous as it is now; and if there be a hope for the North—a hope that she will ever ride the waves of bottomless perdition that roll around her—it is in the fact that the South will stand by her and will lend a helping hand to rescue and to save her.

Why, then, shall we not affirm and proclaim the nature of our institution? And why not demand of the government the recognition of our right to be supreme upon this question? Is it that such legislation does not injure us? It may be that to some, if not to all, the Southern States, there would be material advantage in a further importation of slaves. To such this legislation is an injury. It may be that a further importation of slaves would give political power to the South; and to the South, therefore, this legislation is an injury. But admit that to neither is there such a requisition, and still these Acts are of irreparable wrong and injury. They are wrong in that they are the censure of the Gov-

ernment, of which we are an equal party; and an injury in the fact that they are a brand upon our institution. The spread of slavery may be wrong, and therefore the Missouri Compromise; but slavery itself must be wrong, when the ships and seamen of our country are kept upon the seas to preclude the means to its formation. By no dexterity can we dodge the logical accuracy of this conclusion. We may show, as we can show, that this union of unequal races is right; that it exhibits the best form of society the world has ever seen; that it exhibits order and the securities of order; that it has raised the savage to an agency in civilization; that it has given the ruling race a higher point to start from in its reach to nobler objects—still the mind will follow the wrong to its results; still, if the trade be piracy, the slave is plunder; if it be a crime to take him, it is a crime to keep him; and sense and reason tell us we abandon slavery, when we admit a wrong in the means to its formation.

Why, then, shall we not demand the repeal of these restrictions? Is it that it will precipitate an issue? That is the one thing, perhaps, the most devoutly to be wished for. The contest is impending and inevitable, unless we shall escape it in submission. The North has seventeen States and sixteen million people; the South has fifteen States, and but ten million people; the North has thus the power of legislation, and she has shown that she will use it; she has used it already to the limits of endurance; she entertains petitions to abolish slavery; she has put restrictions on the slave trade; she has fixed limits to the spread of slavery; she has prohibited the trade in slaves within the limits of the Capitol; she has made an effort to grasp the helm of government; she is marshalling her forces for another grasp in 1860; she proscribes the men who will not literally carry out her evil edicts; and thus, therefore, there is revealed already the power and purpose of oppression. But it is more important still, that there is, of that aggression, the necessity. The proclivities of power are certain and resistless. It runs to oppression as naturally and necessarily as waters flow or sparks fly upwards. No logic, no policy, no feeling, can avert it. Its leaders, so-called, are as powerless to control it as the reeds the current upon which they float. It is true, they may see the precipice and may recoil from the verge, but only to be trampled by the mass that plunges after; and we must stem the current, or we must erect political barriers against it. If, then, it is our purpose to preserve the fortunes and the form of that society an Eternal Providence has committed to our keeping, the issue is inevitable, and wise and prudent men must own the sooner it is made the better. The power and patronage of the Government are already in the hands of our antagonists, and every hour's delay but strengthens them and wears away from us the nerve and spirit of resistance.

Then why not now demand repeal? Is it for the reason that it is not policy to import more

slaves? If so, we will not import them. The several Southern States can decide that question for themselves. If Texas, with her broad domain, may want them, she may admit them; if we may not want them, we may exclude them. It is not now policy to admit the introduction of free negroes, and we now exclude them without an Act of Congress. So, also, could we exclude the slave. Is it that it would not be right to import them? If so, are we not able to restrain ourselves? Must we have aid of Congress to keep us from the wrong? Is that Congress more wise, more prudent, more virtuous, than ourselves? Do they know better than we do what is honest and becoming? And are we willing to confess, not only that our slaves are plunder, and that they come to us through piracy, but that such is our state of helplessness and degradation if it were not for the General Government, we would rush again, with inebriate alacrity, to the criminal indulgence? But say that no Southern State may want them, or may ever want them—say even, that it may be wrong to import them—and yet is it of extreme importance that we should be supreme upon this question. The power assumed by the General Government to legislate upon this subject, if supreme above the States, will be as supreme at some other time to force them in, as it is now to keep them out; and will any say that it is safe and right to be upon both questions at the mercy of the General Government; that when the South shall be reduced to the condition of a conquered province—when manliness and independence shall have left us—when literature and fashion shall have followed to the North—when there will be no hope of political power from a further importation of slaves—no assurance that we will have the physical ability to control them, to our own security and order—that then it will not be of interest to the North to force them in, and that then it will not be of the very last importance to the South to keep them out. If this be so, it is now time for the South to determine whether she will be *sui juris* upon this vital subject, and if not prepared to hold our institution at the mercy of the North, it is now the time to strike for independence.

Is it for the reason that the North will not yield to our demands? This is not to be assumed. It is true the North will not allow the South a road to power if she can help it. But it must be remembered that the existence of the North depends upon the Union. Her every interest is parasitic. Her cities are dependent on the South for custom. Her factories are dependent on the South for a market. They would have our trade and custom upon their own terms; but they must have them: without them their factories would fail and New York would be shriveled to the dimensions of a common town. If the South were independent they could not have them; the South would trade direct to foreign countries; upon foreign fabrics she would exact no higher duties than on fabrics from the North.

If the factories of the North can barely stand now, when protected by an average impost duty of twenty-five per cent., they could not then stand under such a competition; and the stake, therefore, is one of existence, which the North can never risk on such a venture. The North would preserve dominion, but it is imperative upon her to preserve the Union. The madness of the North increases, and the time may come when considerations of interest even will not control her action; but it has not come yet—and now I believe that there is not a demand to be made by the South, no matter how extravagant, which, if made as the condition of this Union, would not be accepted by the North.

But say that it is so. Say that though we repudiate restrictions on the slave trade, and demand the repeal of them, the North shall not assent to it. Then an issue will have been made, and if not conceded, it is possible the South may be forced to the intrepidity of acting for herself upon the subject. But if not, she will at least have put herself right upon the record. She will have averted the reproach of being a party to the censure of her own institutions—of concurring in her own condemnation—of mealy practising what she does not dare to preach—of holding to the world a sentiment which in every action of her life she contradicts—and it is time that she should do so. It is time that we should speak out like men upon this subject. If we practice slavery, let us avow it—let us own it as a right, rather than allow it to be imputed as a wrong—let us demand of our common Government that it will depart from the office of discrimination, and let us bare our institutions in their proper aspect and condition to the world, or let us bury them.

Is it for the reason that we would shock the moral sentiment of other countries? It is convenient for the North to execrate our institution, for she finds her profit in keeping it at a discount. It is convenient for England to execrate the institution, for she regards it as a principle of strength to the North, and as the prop therefore of her most imperious rival. But it is an error to suppose that any of these States are tender on the score of human rights. England crushes India—France, Algeria—Russia, Prussia and Austria have partitioned Poland—all march to opportunity; and if forced to look for European morality in the history of European States, we will find everywhere an unequivocal assertion of the one great principle that strength is virtue, and weakness only crime. Nor is it true that European States are hostile to the spread of slavery at the South. They are hostile to this Union, perhaps; they see in it a threatening rival in every branch of art, and they see that rival armed with one of the most potent productive agents the world has ever seen. They would crush India and Algeria to make an equal supply of cotton with the North, and failing in this, they would crush slavery to bring the North to a footing with them; but to slavery

without the North they have no repugnance.—On the contrary, if it were to stand out for itself, free from the control of any other power, and were to offer to all a fair and open trade in its commodities, it would not only not be warred upon, but the South would be singularly favored; crowns would bend before her; kingdoms and empires would enter the lists for her approval, and quitting her free estate, it would be in her option to become the bride of the world, rather than remain, as now, the miserable mistress of the North. The repugnance to Southern slavery therefore, is not due to its nature, but to the relations only in which, by the accidents of its history, it has been placed; and if there be a measure which will teach the North that the South is to be no longer the passive subject of oppression—which will teach the world that the North is not the Union, and which, therefore, will not only not shock the world, but will inspire a feeling of respectful consideration—it will be that which declares that the South will henceforth be supreme upon the questions which affect her own peculiar institutions.

Is it from an unwillingness in this State to run again in advance of public opinion at the South? I know there are those who have been panic-stricken at the fearful intrepidity of some of our political movements; but they may be relieved of apprehension of any evil from it.—South Carolina has been too far advanced for placemen and politicians, if we have such characters among us. But she has never been too far advanced for liberty and the respect of other Southern States. She has made no call upon the South that has not been justified by the occasion; none that the South, to the best of her ability, has not ultimately answered; and if there be a State in this Union distinguished by the respect and confidence of other States, whose professions are unquestioned, whose principles are regarded as authority, and whose delegates, whether to the National Legislature or to Conventions of its own political section, are received with high consideration, and who are looked upon as banner-bearers in every just and honorable cause, that State is South Carolina. That she is so distinguished, is for the reason only that her principles have always been pronounced; that her action has always been decided; that she has always been ready for emergencies without considerations of expediency; and if we would emulate the deeds of those who have gone before us, and would merit and transmit their honors and their virtues, it is now for us to follow their example.

Mr. Speaker, It is possible that there never may be a peaceful solution to the questions at issue between these sections. Within this Union there are distinct principles of nationality, and it is possible that they may never be torn apart without the throes of revolution. It is an ordinance of nature, wise and right as nature's ordinances always are, that the germs of animal life can only come through hemorrhage and rupture

to existence. And it may be an ordinance of nature also, that the germs of society can only come through hemorrhage and rupture to development. The Realm of Britain, pregnant of the principle that Equality is the right of man, was delivered only through the Revolution. This Union, pregnant of the greater principle, that equality is the right of equals only, may need another Revolution to deliverance. But if it be possible to escape that trial; if it be possible for the South to come, as she will come, to the functions of her social nature without the severance of existing ties, without the rupture of relations that are still fondly cherished, without imbruing her hands in the blood of kindred, it must be in the way that we propose. It must be by giving play to the elements of her system, by permitting of the subject race enough to meet her requisitions, by giving her thus a path to political power, and through political power to the security of her rights. But without this, there is no power on earth to save this Union; and if there were, there would be no conceivable calamity so dreadful as its preservation.

If slavery stand, and it must stand—for it is too abundant of blessings and too prodigal of promise to be given up—it must start from its repose—it must take the moral strength of an aggressive attitude. Though strong, strong as a tempest slumbering, with latent energies of infiction and endurance to meet the world in arms, it is still unsafe unless those energies are called to action. The passive subject of a foreign sentiment it has been too long already. It was thus that slavery fell in Domingo and Jamaica. It is thus that it may fall in Cuba, and here, also, for here already the toils are thrown around it. It is proscribed and reprobated—its foreign sources of support are cut away from it—the reins of its government are held by other hands than its own—its own property is used to corrupt its own people. Men, diffident of its endurance, move away from it. Its pious people are instructed to deplore it. Its women and children are taught to turn against it. Its friends who speak for its integrity, and who claim the means to its extension, are looked upon as agitators, and I now, who speak truly what I believe for its advancement and the advancement of humanity, in which, under Heaven, I believe it to be the most potent agent this world has ever seen—am sure that scarce a woman's heart in all this land responds to what I say, or that, from the pious and pure, whom most I would wish to please, if to please them were consistent with my duty, will rise one prayer for the measure we propose. These things being so, it is time that slavery should be roused to a consciousness of responsibility for its own preservation; that it should become an actor in the drama of its own fate; that it should speak for itself upon this great question. It never yet has spoken. The world speaks of slavery, the North speaks of slavery, we speak of slavery as a thing apart from us, but slavery never yet has spoken, and it is time that

it should speak. When it does, its first utterance will be, "We ~~must~~ be free—free to expand according to our own nature—free of the touch of any hostile hand upon us—we are right in that existence which it has pleased Almighty God to give us, and we can admit no declaration of a wrong in the means to our advancement."

Mr. Speaker, we have been elected here at the South to a fearfully momentous trust. It is a trust of moment to have liberty and hopes at stake, with the hand of power already stretched to grasp them. But there is a trust for time and man of even greater moment. It is the precept of human experience that equals must be equal, and that political distinctions must therefore yield to that necessity. But it is the precept, also, that to power and progress there must be separate orders in the State, and to us, the first in human history, has been committed a society combining these conditions. There has been equality in France, but despotism has been a welcome refuge from its enormities; there were slaves in Greece and Rome, but they were the natural equals of their masters, and the relation therefore was forced and transitory; but here there is a perfect compliance with the requisition—there is, among equals, equality the most perfect, and there are orders that can never merge; and in this the Eternal Ruler of the world has committed to us a sacred social truth, which we are under the most sacred obligations to transmit to other ages. To that transmission we are committed by the highest sanctions that were ever incumbent upon any people. If we do transmit it we shall find as our reward a career of greatness and of glory more extended than was ever opened to the hopes of man. If we do not, if we bend in the execution of that trust to the requisitions of another people not so charged with that responsibility, and so fail, we shall leave to our land and our posterity a heritage of calamity and crime, the darkest that ever came to any people. States have been subjugated, and Rome was plundered by barbarians, yet carnage ended with resistance; but here, with subjugation comes a war of races, hand to hand, that will not end while a remnant of the weaker race remains. In view of these considerations, then—in view of the hopes and glories of success—in view of the crimes and calamities of failure—in view of the blessings to be conferred upon other lands and other ages, and of the smiles of an approving Heaven, it is incumbent upon us to start now upon the performance of our duty, and it is not an indiscreet or an unbecoming act in that performance to tell this government that, charged with this momentous trust, we cannot yield to them the office of determining its conditions—that that, of right, belongs to us, not to be affected by them, and that upon the rights and obligations of that office we can take no judgment but our own. To do this is the object of the resolutions I have had the honor to present, and I hope, therefore, that they will meet the approbation of the House.





